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AN

ADDRESS

TO THE PUBLIC,

ON AN

Important Subject,

CONNECTED WITH

THE RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER

OF THE

EAST INDIA COMPANY.

By ROBERT HALL, A. M.

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AN

ADDRESS,

&c. &c.

AS the subject of the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company is shortly to come before Parliament, with a view to a final decision, it is presumed that it will not be deemed impertinent to invite the attention of the Legislature to a particular connected with that subject, which is judged of high importance. The point to which we refer, respects the propriety of inserting a clause in the new Charter, authorizing the peaceable dissemination of Christian principles in India. For want of such a provision, the Missionaries who have lately visited that country, have been under the necessity of going there by the circuitous route of America, besides meeting with considerable obstructions in their attempts to settle, and being exposed

to much vexation and interruption in their quiet efforts to plant the Christian faith. It must surely be considered as an extraordinary fact, that in a country under the government of a people professing Christianity, *that* religion should be the only one that is discountenanced and suppressed.

That the most complete toleration should be extended to the various modes of belief prevailing in those remote dependencies of our empire, and that none of the inhabitants should be subjected to the slightest inconvenience on account of their adherence to the religious system of their forefathers, is readily admitted; nor would any event give more serious concern to the writer of this address, than an interference with that right of private judgment which he deems an inalienable prerogative of human nature. But for a Christian nation to give a decided preference to polytheism and idolatry by prohibiting the dissemination of a purer faith, and thus employ its powers in suppressing the truth, and prolonging the existence of the most degrading and deplorable superstitions, is a line of conduct equally repugnant to the dictates of religion, and the maxims of sound policy. To oppose by force the propagation of revealed truth,

from any worldly considerations whatever, is such a sacrifice of right to expediency, as can be justified on no principles but what will lead to the subversion of all morality and religion.

If Christianity be a communication from heaven, to oppose its extension is *to fight against God;* an impiety which, under every possible combination of circumstances, must expect a severe rebuke; but the guilt of which is inconceivably aggravated, when the opposition proceeds from the professors of that very religion. We have no example in the history of the world of such a conduct; we have no precedent of a people prohibiting the propagation of their own faith; a species of intolerance exposed not only to the objections which lie in common against all restraints upon conscience, but to a train of absurdities peculiar to itself, at the same time that it imposes a character of meanness on the ruling powers, by the virtual confession it includes, that they have either no religion, or a religion of which they are ashamed. As the equality of all religions, the distinguishing tenet of deism, is alike repugnant to the dictates of reason, and the oracles of truth, so it is ill calculated to conciliate the esteem of Eastern nations, on whom it can have no other effect than to desecrate

the British name, by depriving it of the veneration which nature, unsophisticated by impiety, has inseparably connected with sentiments of religious belief. Powerfully impressed as they are with religious principles and prejudices, however erroneous, we can scarcely adopt a more effectual expedient for securing their contempt and abhorrence, than an avowed indifference to whatever concerns that momentous subject.

It is an undeniable fact, that no persons have been so popular in India, as the men who have exerted themselves with the most steady and persevering zeal in the dissemination of Christian principles; of which we have a striking example in the excellent Schwartz, for many years a Missionary on the coast of Coromandel, who, by his wise and benevolent conduct, rendered, on various occasions, the most essential service to the British interests, and became the object of the enthusiastic attachment of the natives.*

The attempt to propagate Christianity in India is not a new experiment; it has been now tried for more than a century: it received the warmest support of George the First, of il-

* See the Reports of the Society at Bartlett's Buildings, for promoting Christian Knowledge.

lustrious memory, as well as of the then Archbishop of Canterbury; and in the hands of Ziegenbalgius, and his successors, was crowned with distinguished success.* Similar attempts have been more recently made in Bengal, and the adjacent provinces; and several Christian societies have been planted by the labours of Missionaries in those parts of India. It deserves particular attention, that no inconvenience, not even the slightest, has arisen from these enterprises; and that whatever agitation has been witnessed among the natives at different times, the propagation of Christianity has never been the cause, or even the pretext. When intelligence of the insurrection at Vellore reached England, there were not wanting persons who endeavoured to ascribe it to the jealousy and uneasiness excited by the efforts of Missionaries; but no attempt could be more unsuccessful, since, in the course of a most accurate investigation of the circumstances connected with that event, we have it, on the authority of Lord Teignmouth, that not even the name of a Missionary was mentioned. It arose from causes totally distinct. Thus

* See the excellent Letters from his Majesty and the Archbishop, addressed to Ziegenbalgius, in Buchanan's Ecclesiastical Researches.

have we the experience of more than a century to justify the conclusion, that nothing is to be feared for the tranquillity of India from the operations of Missionaries, subject, as they must ever be, to the control of the constituted authorities.

The number of natives who profess Christianity is not small nor inconsiderable. The disciples of Schwartz and his successors on the Eastern side of the peninsula, amount to fifty thousand; and the Syrian Christians, on the coast of Malabar, to several hundred thousands; the greater part of them converted from the Bramins, and the higher classes. They have subsisted there from the fifth century, are in possession of one hundred and nineteen churches, some of them sumptuous and splendid edifices; and their superior elevation of character and purity of manners are attested, on the most respectable authority, to be such as the possession of Christian faith might be expected to inspire.* In addition to this; translations of the New Testament, in almost all the vernacular dialects of India, have been recently circulated, and a considerable number of the natives are assiduously and constantly employed in preaching

* See the interesting narrative of Dr. Buchanan's visit to the Syrian Christians, in his Ecclesiastical Researches.

the gospel; so that it is too late to think of checking its career: the possession it has taken of the public mind will necessarily render all such attempts impracticable. The only question which remains to be decided, is, whether its further propagation shall be left solely in the hands of natives, or whether intelligent and respectable Europeans who come more immediately into contact with the British government, and in whose prudence and experience greater confidence may be reposed, shall be allowed to superintend its movements. The good seed having struck its root too deep ever to be extirpated, the only alternative is, either to leave it to its spontaneous growth, aided by the labour of Hindoos, or to place it under a more skilful and enlightened cultivation.

Though strangers to the theory, the inhabitants of Hindostan have been long familiarized to the practice of toleration. In no part of the world is there a greater variety of sects, or more contrariety in the modes of religious belief, subsisting without the slightest disturbance: even the grand division of the natives into Hindoos and Mahometans has continued for ages, without interruption to the public harmony.

But if nothing is to be feared from the dissemination of Christian principles in India, the advantages resulting from it, whether we consult the interest of the natives, or our own, are too obvious to require to be enumerated, and too important to be overlooked. With respect to its aspect on the natives, will it be contended that a more powerful instrument can be devised for meliorating and raising their character, than grafting upon it the principles of our holy religion, which, wherever it prevails, never fails to perfect whatever is good, and to correct whatever is evil, in the human constitution; and to which Europe is chiefly indebted for those enlightened views, and that high sense of probity and honour, which distinguish it so advantageously in a comparison with Asiatic nations? The prevalence of Christianity every where marks the boundary which separates the civilized from the barbarous or semi-barbarous parts of the world: let but this boundary be extended, and the country included within its limits may be considered as redeemed from the waste, and prepared to receive the precious seeds of civilization and improvement. Independently of eternal prospects, it may be safely affirmed, that

polytheism and idolatry draw after them such a train of absurd and dismal consequences, as to be quite incompatible with the due expansion of the human intellect, and necessarily to prevent the operations of reason from reaching their maturity and perfection. Wherever Christianity prevails, mankind are uniformly progressive: it communicates that just manner of thinking upon the most important subjects, which, extending its influence thence to every department of speculative and moral truth, inspires a freedom of enquiry and an elevation of sentiment, which raise the disciples of Revelation immeasurably above the level of unassisted nature.

The Hindoo superstition is characterised by a puerile extravagance of conception, as hostile to the cultivation of reason, as the enormity of its practices is revolting to humanity. It oppresses the former by its gigantic absurdities: it extinguishes the latter by the cruelty of its rites. The annual destruction of female infants in Guzarat and Kutch is estimated at fifteen or twenty thousand*. Till lately, it had been the custom from time immemorial to immolate, at the island of Saugor, and at other places es-

* See Moore's Hindoo Infanticide.

teemed holy, on the banks of the Ganges, human victims, or to destroy them by sharks. From a late investigation, it appears that the number of women who sacrifice themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands, within thirty miles of Calcutta, is, on an average, upwards of two hundred*. A multitude of courtezans are uniformly attached to the principal temples; and the most obscene symbols exhibited to inflame the passions of their votaries†.

While the history of all times and nations evinces the inseparable alliance of impurity and cruelty with the worship of idols, is it consistent with the dictates of humanity, not merely to witness these enormities without attempting to correct them, but to oppose the communication of the only remedy which is capable of effecting a cure?

The base venality, together with the spirit of artifice and intrigue, which distinguish the natives of Hindostan, have rendered it the theatre of perpetual revolutions, robbed its native governments of every principle of stability, and rendered poisonings, assassinations, and treachery, expedients so constantly resorted to by

* See Buchanan's Memoir, p. 96, Appendix. In a Letter lately received from Dr. Carey, he estimates the whole number of women annually sacrificed throughout India at ten thousand.

† See Sonnerat's Voyage aux Indes et a la Chine, p. 219.

the parties in conflict, that it is impossible to peruse its history without shuddering. To affirm that there is nothing in their superstitions calculated to correct these vices, is saying little, when, in fact, they derive a powerful sanction from the maxims of their religion, and from the character of their gods. There is not one of their deities pourtrayed in their Shasters, whose moral character is tolerably correct. How much Christianity is wanted to exalt the sentiments, and purify the principles of this corrupt and effeminate race, is too obvious to need to be insisted on.

That their conversion is practicable, is ascertained beyond controversy by the success which has already attended the experiment; that no apprehensions are to be entertained for the permanence of British power, in consequence of the attempt, is manifest from experience; that to consult the welfare of the subject is the first duty of the sovereign, and the chief distinction betwixt the exercise of legitimate authority and the operation of lawless tyranny, will not be disputed in an enlightened age; and that the Christian religion is the greatest blessing we have received, the most precious boon we can bestow, none but infidels will deny. It surely will not be asserted, that we

are under less obligation to communicate a good, because that good may be traced to the immediate interposition of Heaven, or because it contains the seed and germ of eternal felicity. He who believes the Bible, must know that the heathen are to be given to Christ for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and that therefore to *forbid his being preached to the Gentiles that they may be saved,* is an attempt to contravene the purposes of the Most High, equally impotent and presumptuous. *Let the potsherds strive against the potsherds of the earth, but woe unto him who striveth with his Maker.* Such conduct, persevered in, must infallibly draw down the judgments of God on the people to whose infatuated counsels it is to be ascribed. Whoever considers the aspect of the times, must be invincibly prejudiced not to discern the symptoms of a peculiar crisis, the distinguishing features of which, are the rapid subversion of human institutions, and the advancement of the kingdom of God. *The stone cut out without hands has already fallen upon the image, and made it like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor:* the next event we are to look for in the order of Providence, is its enlarging itself, *till it becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth.* If there ever was a period

when the propagation of the true religion might be resisted with impunity, that period is passed; and the Master of the universe is now addressing the greatest potentates in the language of an ancient oracle:---" Be wise now, ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth." Encompassed as we are with the awful tokens of a presiding and avenging Providence, dissolving the fabrics of human wisdom, extinguishing the most ancient dynasties, and tearing up kingdoms by their roots, it would be the height of infatuation any longer to oppose the reign of God, whose purposes will pursue their career, in spite of the efforts of human policy, which must either yield their co-operation, or be broken by its force.

All that is desired, on this occasion, is simply that the word of God may be permitted to have free course. Whether it be consistent with sound policy for the British government to employ any part of its resources in aid of the cause of Christianity in India, is a question which it is not necessary to discuss, while its friends confine their views to a simple toleration, and request merely that its teachers may not be harassed or impeded in their attempts to communicate instruction to the natives. Before such a liberty can be withheld, the principles

of toleration must be abandoned; nor will it be practicable to withhold it without exciting a sanguinary persecution; where men are to be found who will eagerly embrace the crown of martyrdom rather than relinquish the performance of what appears to them a high and awful duty. And what a spectacle will it exhibit, for a Christian government to employ force in the *support* of idolatry, and the *suppression* of truth.

Instead of dwelling on the necessary effects of such a measure, let us consider for a moment the beneficial consequences likely to result from an opposite mode of conduct. On that improvement of character which the cordial reception of revealed truth cannot fail to operate, it will be easy to graft some of the best habits and institutions of European nations, advancing gradually through an interminable series of social order and happiness. Under the fostering hand of religion, reason will develope her resources, and philosophy mature her fruits. Nor will the advantages accruing to the British interests, from a change so salutary, be less certain, or less important. The possession of the same faith will occasion such an approximation of the habits and sentiments of the natives to our own, as will render the union

firm, by rendering it cordial. While a total opposition in their views on the most important points subsists betwixt the sovereign and the subjects ;---while objects adored by the one are held in contempt and abhorrence by the other; they may be artificially connected, but it is impossible they should be united: it is rather a juxtaposition of inanimate parts, than an union of minds. In such a situation the social tie wants that cementing principle which is requisite to give it strength and stability: it is a strained and unnatural position, in which things are held contrary to their native bent; in which authority is upheld merely by force, without deriving support from that sympathy of congenial sentiment, which forms its truest basis. Hence the precarious tenure by which European states have successively held dominion in India, where all has been submitted to the arbitration of the sword; where, the moment force has been withdrawn or relaxed, authority has ceased, and each, in its turn, has gained a transient ascendancy, none a firm and tranquil possession. In order to obviate the mischiefs arising from such a state of things, it is extremely desirable, providing it be practicable, to impart to our subjects in the East, some principle which shall draw them into

closer contact with the ruling power; and what principle equally operative and efficient with the possession of a common religion? Though the universal diffusion of Christianity over India will probably be a work of time, its influence in strengthening the social compact by augmenting the attachment of the natives, will be uniformly progressive; and while external tranquillity is secured by the superiority of our policy and our arms, we shall every year be making our way into their hearts: we shall be establishing an interior dominion, and may confidently reckon on the unshaken fidelity of every Christian convert. This is not mere conjecture: for in all the trying vicissitudes experienced by the British interests in India, the Hindoo Christians have invariably approved themselves our firmest friends and abettors.

Though the writer of this is afraid of being tedious, there is another consideration connected with the present subject, which he deems of too much importance not to be mentioned. The possession of India, it is well known, is an object to which our enemies are looking with eager desire; accompanied with jealousy at that splendour which the vastness of our oriental empire confers on the British name and character. No efforts will they deem too

great, no sacrifices too expensive, to rob us of so bright a jewel. What events may arise hereafter to facilitate the accomplishment of their wishes, it is beyond the power of human sagacity to conjecture; one thing is certain, that nothing will oppose a more formidable obstacle to their designs than the diffusion of Christianity. They who have received that inestimable blessing, will infallibly cling with ardour to the people to whom they are indebted for it. They will feel more than a natural affection to the country which has opened to them the prospect of immortality, and nourished them with the bread of life. In all the struggles to retain or to acquire dominion in the East, the Christian portion of the population will, to a man, be the zealous partizans of Great Britain; a firm and immoveable band, whose devoted attachment will in some measure compensate for their inferiority of number. In this species of policy too, in this most unexceptionable mode of conciliating esteem, we shall have nothing to apprehend from the intrigues of our rivals, who are equally indisposed and disqualified to engage in such an enterprize.

If we consider what may be the probable intention of Providence in opening so extensive a communication betwixt Europe and the most

ancient seats of Idolatry, and more especially of subjecting such immense territories in the East to the British arms, we can conceive no end more worthy of the Deity in these momentous changes than to facilitate the propagation of true religion.

Our acquisition of power there has been so rapid, so extensive, and so disproportioned to the limits of our native empire, that there are few events in which the interposition of Providence may be more distinctly traced. From the possession of a few forts in different parts of the coast, which we were permitted to erect for the protection of our commerce, we have risen, in the course of less than half a century, to a summit of power, whence we exert a direct dominion over fifty millions, and a paramount influence over a hundred millions of men. By an astonishing train of events, a large portion of the population of the oriental world has been subjected to the control of an Island placed in the extremities of the West of Europe. Kingdoms have fallen after kingdoms, and provinces after provinces, with a rapidity which resembles the incidents of a romance, rather than the accustomed order of political events. It is remarkable, too, that this career of conquest has uniformly directed its steps towards those parts

of the earth, and to those only, which are the primeval seats of pagan idolatry; forming an intimate connexion betwixt the most enlightened of Christian nations, and the victims of the most inveterate and deplorable system of superstition mankind have ever witnessed. As we must be blind not to discern the finger of God in these transactions, it behoves us to consider for what purposes we are lifted to so high a preeminence.

It is certainly not to be ascribed to a blind predilection, which aims at no other object than to gratify ambition, by extending the power, and augmenting the grandeur of Great Britain; a motive too puerile to satisfy the requisitions of human reason, much more to limit the views of an eternal mind.

The possession of sovereignty over extensive kingdoms is a sacred trust, for which nations are not less responsible than individuals, a delegation from the supreme fountain of power; and as the unalterable laws of nature forbid us to confound men with things, or to forget the reciprocal obligations subsisting betwixt the sovereign and the subject, we can scarcely be guilty of a greater crime than to consider the latter as merely subservient to the interests of the former. Every individual of the immense

population subjected to our sway, has claims on our justice and benevolence which we cannot with impunity neglect: the wants and sufferings of every individual utter a voice which goes to the heart of humanity. In return for their allegiance, we owe them protection and instruction, together with every effort to meliorate their condition, and improve their character. It is but fair to acknowledge, that we have not been wholly insensible to these claims, and that the extension of our power has been hitherto highly beneficial. But why, in the series of improvements, has Christianity been neglected? Why has the communication of the greatest good we have to bestow, been hitherto fettered and restrained; and while every modification of idolatry, not excepting the bloody and obscene orgies of Juggernaut, has received support, has every attempt to instruct the natives in the things which belong to their peace, been suppressed? It will surely appear surprising to posterity, that a nation, glorying in the purity of its faith as its highest distinction, should suffer its transactions in the East to be characterised by a spirit of infidelity, as though it were imagined the foundations of empire could be laid only in apostacy and impiety; at a moment, too, when

Europe, convulsed to its centre, beholds these frantic erections swept with the besom of destruction. Their astonishment will be the more excited, when they compare our conduct in this instance with the unprecedented exertions we are making for the diffusion of religious knowledge in other directions; with the operations of the Bible Society, which, formed for the sole purpose of conveying the oracles of God to all quarters, has risen to an importance that entitles it to be regarded as a national concern; in which statesmen, nobles, and prelates, have enrolled their names, emulous of the honour of advancing to the utmost the noble design of the institution; with the Bartlett's Buildings Society, employed for upwards of a century in attempts to convert the natives of Hindostan, which includes in the list of its members every bishop, and every dignified ecclesiastic in the realm; with the numerous translations going on in all the dialects of the East, to which the learned, both in Europe and in Asia, are looking with eager expectation. When posterity shall compare the conduct we are reprobating with these facts, how great their astonishment, to find the piety of the nation has suffered itself to lie prostrate at the feet of a few individuals, the open or disguised enemies of the faith of Jesus!

It is impossible, in connexion with the circumstances to which we have adverted, to mistake the real sentiments of the British people, or not to perceive that the illustrious associations already mentioned are entitled, on a question of this nature, to be considered as its genuine and legitimate organ.

It ought never to be forgotten, in the consideration of this subject, that it is inseparably connected with liberty of conscience. Religious toleration implies not merely the freedom of thought, which no human power can restrain, and which equally subsists under the most tyrannical and the most enlightened governments; it comprehends, also, the freedom of communication, and the right of discussion, within the limits of sober and dispassionate argument. He who is impressed with a conviction of the importance of the Christian verities, it is reasonable to suppose, will be anxious to communicate them: he will probably feel as St. Paul did in a similar situation, whose spirit was stirred within him when he beheld Athens wholly given up to idolatry: he may be touched with so strong a commiseration for the victims of religious imposture, and so powerful a sense of the duty of attempting to correct it, as to be ready to adopt the language employed

on another occasion---" We *cannot* but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

None but the determined enemy of truth and decency will deny that such a state of mind is possible, or that it is more allied to virtue than to vice. If at this juncture, a superior power interposes, and says, You shall not impart your conviction, however strong; you shall not attempt to dispel delusions the most gross, or correct enormities the most flagrant, though no other means are thought of but calm expostulation and argument; in what, I would ask, does such an interference differ from persecution? Here is conscience on one side, an enlightened conscience, as all Christians must confess, and force on the other; which is precisely the position in which things are placed by every instance of persecution. If Christianity was ever persecuted; if the martyrologies of all times and nations are not to be exploded as mere fiction and romance; this is persecution, and persecution of a most portentous character, being directed, in support of a system we detest, against the religion by which we expect to be saved. Here are a people, indignant posterity will exclaim, who profess subjection to the Saviour of the world, and hold in their hands the oracles which foretell the universal extension of his dominion, who

yet make it a crime to breathe his name in pagan lands, and employ their power to fence out the scene of his future triumphs, and render it, as far as possible, inaccessible to his religion. With what efficacious sincerity, and edifying fervor, must this people have prayed, "thy kingdom come!"---Admirable successors of the Constantines and the Charlemagnes of a former age! Faithful stewards of the manifold gifts of God!

When the parallel betwixt the conduct of modern missionaries and the first preachers of the gospel is insisted on, it is usual to attempt to annul the conclusion deduced from the comparison, by remarking that the latter were possessed of miraculous powers, to which the former make no pretensions. That this circumstance occasions a real disparity in the means of insuring success, will be readily acknowledged; but that it makes any difference whatever in the right of imparting instruction, will not hastily be conceded. Had such supernatural interpositions never accompanied the publication of the gospel, it had wanted its credentials, and been essentially defective in the proof of its divine origination. It was necessary for a new dispensation, when first ushered into the world, to be accompanied with a direct appeal to the senses, with the visible signatures of a divine hand; and it is the

glory of our holy religion to have possessed them in a variety and splendour that astonished mankind, and laid a foundation for the faith and obedience of all succeeding ages. At its *entrance,* such an economy was requisite to prepare the way. But when these miraculous occurrences, after enduring the severest scrutiny, under circumstances the most favourable to investigation, were committed to writing, and formed a compact body of external evidences; when the supernatural origin of the Christian faith had taken its place amongst the most indubitable of recorded facts, it was no longer necessary to be continually repeating the same proofs; nor consistent with the majesty of Heaven, to be ever laying the foundation afresh. It was time to assume the truth of religion as a thing proved.

As we were none of us eye-witnesses of the miracles wrought in the primitive ages, but rest our belief on historical documents, it is not impossible, as far as the truth of Christianity is concerned, to lay open to pagans the sources of our conviction, and by that means to place them in nearly the same situation with ourselves; to say nothing of that internal evidence which *commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* This is actually the mode

in which the light of Revelation has been chiefly diffused since the cessation of miraculous gifts; which, in the opinion of some, terminated with the apostles, in the judgment of others, were continued through the first three centuries, but are universally allowed to have ceased long before the conversion of the northern and western parts of Europe. Did the disciples of St. Columba, who spread Christianity through the German provinces on the Baltic, through the kingdoms of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, owe their success to miraculous powers? Did St. Austin and his associates, who laid the foundations of the religious establishments in England, make such pretensions?

To demand miracles in order to justify the propagation of Christianity in pagan countries, is to attribute to it a state of perpetual weakness and pupillage: it is to cancel all that is past, to accuse the most illustrious missionaries of enthusiasm, and the faith of our forefathers of folly and credulity. The principle we are attempting to expose, not content with inflicting a stigma on a particular sect or party, involves the whole Christian community established in these realms, in the foul reproach of being the illegitimate offspring of fanaticism, or imposture. It is only necessary for us to place

ourselves in imagination at that period when the foundation of the Church was laid in this and in other European countries, to perceive that the same objections which are made to the present efforts of missionaries, apply with equal force to those that are past. They who first exhibited the mystery of the cross to the view of our rude ancestors, were equally destitute of miraculous powers with ourselves. But they felt the power of the world to come: they were deeply impressed with the dignity and excellence of the Christian dispensation, and touched with a passionate regard for the honour of God and the salvation of souls. These were the motives which impelled them forward; these the weapons of their warfare. The ridicule attempted to be poured on men of the same principles and character, engaged in the same object, is, in fact, reflected on these their predecessors, and is precisely a repetition of the conduct of the impenitent Jews, who honoured the memory, and built the sepulchres of departed, while they were imbuing their hands in the blood of living, prophets. We collect, with eager veneration, the names and atchievements of the first heralds of the gospel; we dwell with exultation on the heroic fortitude they displayed in encountering

the opposition of fierce barbarians, amidst their efforts to reclaim them from a sanguinary superstition, and to imbue their minds with the principles of an enlightened piety. We look up to them as to a superior order of beings, and in the character of the instructors of mankind in the sublimest lessons, entitled to a distinction above all Greek, above all Roman fame; yet, with ineffable absurdity, and a most contemptible littleness of mind, if it please Providence, at distant intervals, to raise up a few congenial spirits, we are prepared to treat them with levity and scorn. It is the misfortune of some men to labour under an incapacity of discerning living worth ;---a sort of moral virtuosi, who form their estimate of characters, as the antiquarian of coins, by the rust of antiquity.

> Urit enim fulgore suo, qui prægravat artes
> Infra se positas : extinctus amabitur idem.
>
> HORACE.

I would not be understood, in the remarks made on this part of the subject, to explode the expectation of the renewal of miraculous agency; which some of the most able divines have unquestionably formed, from a perusal of the prophetic oracles. The inference I would wish to establish is sim-

ply this, that we are not justified in neglecting the means of propagating the truth we already possess, by the absence of higher succour; and that it would ill become the Christian world to abandon the attempts to convert the inhabitants of pagan countries, in deference to the clamours of men, who demand miracles merely because they believe they will not be vouchsafed, and decry the ordinary methods of procedure, because they are within our reach, and have already been crowned with success. To such the language of the prophet Amos may be addressed with propriety;---*Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light.*--- Ch. v. 18.

FINIS.

W. Heseltine, Printer, Checquer Yard, Dowgate Hill, London.